

REMARKS

Applicant's attorney is appreciative of the interview granted by Examiners Meeks and Miller on October 21, 2010. At that interview, Applicant's attorney sought to distinguish the invention from the Christner et al reference based, in part, on the different nature of the starting materials.

Claims 15, 18 and 21-22 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) over Christner et al, while claim 20 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Christner et al in view of Sekhar et al, Bernard et al and Carroll et al, and claim 23 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Christner et al in view of McHugh.

As discussed in detail at the interview, Christner et al teaches a process in which the starting material is in the form of chopped fibers (col. 1, line 67; col. 4, lines 25-26; claim 1), particularly fibers having a length of less than about 2 inches (col. 2, lines 31-32). In the impregnation step, the fibers are place in a box frame having a screen bottom (col. 2, lines 52-54). The starting material of Christner et al is therefore clearly in the form of loose fibers; a "mat" is formed only after impregnation of the chopped fibers (col. 4, lines 32-38).

According to the invention as claimed in claim 15 as examined, the starting material is in the form of "at least one of a felt, a non-woven material and a fabric." At the interview, the Examiners accepted that a felt and a fabric could not be loose fibers as in Christner et al, but questioned the meaning of "non-woven material." Applicant's attorney pointed out the well-known meaning of non-woven material as a fabric-like material made from long fibers, bonded together by chemical, mechanical, heat or solvent treatment.

The present application is based upon an English

translation of a PCT application filed originally in German, and which must be an exact translation of the original German. In the German text, the term which was translated as "non-woven material" is "vlies." Applicant believes that this term is more accurately translated as "fleece," a general term for a soft fabric, often with a deep pile.

The specification and claims have now been amended to change "non-woven material" to "fleece." To support this change in translation, a page from Cassell's German-English English-German Dictionary is attached. Since the amendments made are based upon a more accurate translation, no new matter has been added.

It is further noted that non-woven fabrics are still encompassed by the present claims, as they fall within the category of "fabrics."

The starting materials of the invention are therefore in the form of fabrics, as opposed to the chopped and individual fibers of Christner et al. Particularly as a result of the claimed starting material, a product is obtained with sufficient rigidity to be capable of serving as a support for an object in gas treatment. Christner et al is concerned only with forming a fuel cell electrode, a use for which rigidity is not required.

By starting with a felt, fleece or fabric, the claimed invention operates in a manner contrary to Christner et al, and obtains a product suitable for a purpose entirely different from that of Christner et al.

Applicants note that new claim 24 has been added to the application, reciting that the product of the claimed process has a thickness of at least 5 mm, as disclosed at page 10, lines 7-8 of the specification. While Christner et al does not disclose the thickness of the final product produced, Example 1 of Christner et al states that the mat after

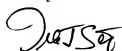
impregnation has a thickness of 0.013 inches, corresponding to 0.33 mm. Applicant believes that after drying and carbonization, the final thickness will similarly be much less than 5 mm.

Sekhar et al, Bernard et al and Carroll et al were discussed in detail in the previous amendment, and none of these references cures the defects of Christner et al. McHugh has been cited to show high temperature carbonization of pitch strands, and also does not cure the defects of the Christner et al reference.

Withdrawal of these rejections is accordingly requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that the present application is now in condition for allowance. An early allowance of the application with amended claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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Cassell's

**German – English
English – German**

Dictionary

**Deutsch – Englisches
Englisch – Deutsches**

Wörterbuch

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MACMILLAN PUBLISHING COMPANY
New York

